

# City of Golden Memorandum



To: Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Board, GURA  
From: Steve Glueck, Director of Planning and Development  
Date: December 27, 2005  
Re: Downtown “Character” Project

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## **Background**

On November 29, 2005 a subcommittee of the three above referenced boards met with staff to discuss a project(s) related to the definition and achievement of Golden’s desired downtown. As the boards all recall, this project has been discussed and worked on in various aspects for several years. The current discussion focused on two primary products as discussed below. Within the subcommittee there was consensus to proceed as discussed in this memo. At this time, it is requested by city staff that the three boards each review this approach and endorse the joint project and collaborative partnership involved.

1. Design Standards and Guidelines Staff recommended and the subcommittee agreed that it would be possible to draft an improved set of architectural standards and guidelines for the downtown area separate from the larger discussion of vision, land use mix, implementation strategies, and redevelopment goals and targets. It was felt that the general character would play off of the remaining several buildings from the City’s primary architectural “heyday”. The project would propose updated standards and guidelines now with future refinements easily be made. Staff offered to attempt to deliver a first draft of the proposed standards and guidelines by January, 2006.

2. Downtown Plan The larger effort that is recommended is a new plan for the downtown area, incorporating a community vision, specific land use recommendations, development and redevelopment philosophies, implementation strategies, and associated programs. It is recommended that the plan be prepared as an update of the Golden Urban Renewal Plan. The update of the GURA downtown plan was the chosen vehicle since it is the most effective tool to combine policy, a potential “regulatory overlay”, and financial implementation strategies. A few of the issues associated with this planning effort are as follows:

- By state statute, the City Council is the approving body of an urban renewal plan or update, however it can be drafted by a planning commission, urban renewal board, city staff, or other entity. The plan to have a joint effort among an urban renewal authority and two city boards is an excellent way to combine the groups in a collaborative way.
- The urban renewal plan is also a prime vehicle to achieve strong community input. With the recent (and near future) significant activity in the immediate area, downtown is on people’s minds and it should be easy to achieve community interest and participation.

- City Council has voiced strong support for an update of the 1989 urban renewal plan and it is already on the GURA work program for the year.

In order to begin this effort, the following steps are recommended:

1. Endorsement of the project as a very high priority for 2006 by all three boards.
2. Development of a work program and preliminary schedule by February 2006.
3. Endorsement of the work program, preliminary schedule, and overall project goals by late February or March, 2006.
4. Start of the public participation process no later than April of 2006.

This memo will be presented to all three of the boards for comment within the next weeks. Comments from individual boards will be forwarded to the group.